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SUBJECT: CODEL INHOFE'S MEETINGS WITH PRESIDENT KUFUOR AND MINISTRY
OF DEFENSE OFFICIALS

¶1. (SBU) SUMMARY: On November 26, President Kufuor and Ghana's Defense Minister told CODEL Inhofe that Ghanaian peacekeepers for Somalia and Darfur must be properly equipped before a deployment. Otherwise, he said, it would be akin to "sending them to the slaughter." Kufuor and Ghana's military leaders also thanked the CODEL for U.S. assistance over the years, highlighting programs in education, military assistance, HIV/AIDS, agriculture and the African Growth and Opportunity Act as beneficial to Ghana, and supporting regional peacekeeping activities. END SUMMARY.

Meeting with President Kufuor

¶2. (SBU) In a November 26 courtesy call with President Kufuor, CODEL Inhofe thanked Kufuor for his positive leadership role in Ghana and Africa. CODEL Inhofe also expressed gratitude to Kufuor for Ghana's history of peacekeeping around the world. Economic progress is also evident and Ghana seems to be making positive strides forward, the CODEL told Kufuor. Noting Ghana's 2008 Presidential election and Kufuor's inability to seek a third term, Sen. Inhofe said he is looking forward to continuing a close relationship with Ghana and its next President.

¶3. (SBU) President Kufuor said that Ghana has enjoyed close cooperation with the U.S. and he expects it to continue into the future. While Ghana has made progress in many areas, Kufuor said problems remain. Stability, Kufuor stressed, is paramount because instability can hinder development and deter investors. Ghana, he said, continues to work to stabilize itself and neighboring countries. Ghana also looks across Africa in its stabilization efforts and Kufuor pointed to Somalia and Darfur as places where Ghana is interested in assisting. Kufuor is pleased that the UN approved the Hybrid Force for Sudan, but emphasized that these forces must be equipped properly in order to have a chance. Otherwise, he said, it is akin to "sending them to slaughter." He said Ghana is looking to the U.S. and South Africa to support its mission to Sudan.

¶4. (SBU) Kufuor said that during his seven years in office, the U.S. has been "very good" to Ghana and Africa. He pointed to the USD 547 Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) compact for Ghana as a prime example of cooperation with the U.S. Kufuor also pointed out assistance in education, mentioning the 2006 visit of First Lady Laura Bush, and said Ghana values assistance on HIV/AIDS. The African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) also benefits Ghana, however, he commented that Ghana does not have the industrial might to allow it to take full advantage of AGOA's benefits. To that end, Kufuor urged CODEL Inhofe to research ways the USG can assist Ghana to develop its industry. Kufuor also praised the recent visit of Treasury Secretary Henry Paulson and the launching of the new USD 250 million investment funds for Africa announced by OPIC CEO Mosbacher during Paulson's November 19 visit to Accra. With this assistance and on its own, Kufuor stressed that the U.S. should appreciate Ghana's and Africa's efforts at moving forward and out of the "chaos, conflicts and poverty" of the past.

¶15. (U) Also on November 27, CODEL Inhofe and Ambassador Bridgewater met with Minister of Defense Albert Kan-Dapaah. In attendance were Deputy Defense Minister William Bofo-Ofori, MOD Chief Director Mr. Oforu Appiah, Chief of the Army Staff Major General S.A. Odotei, Deputy Chief of Navy Staff Commodore Bierko, and Chief of Air Staff Air Vice Marshall J.O. Boateng.

¶16. (U) Kan-Dapaah expressed appreciation to the USG for its support to the Ghanaian Armed Forces. He said Ghana's military helps sustain the country's democracy and economic development. He noted that the military is perceived in Ghana to be a stabilizing force, and that it has a deep respect for human rights.

¶17. (U) The Minister also noted that adequate budget support for the armed forces has been difficult, but that the USG has provided important assistance. In particular, he cited the five new patrol boats that Ghana will receive by June 2008 from the USG, which will help Ghana confront the challenge of narcotics smuggling.

¶18. (U) In addition to helping develop Ghana, said Kan-Dapaah, the Ministry of Defense is focused on peacekeeping operations in Ghana and around the world, and is trying to prepare for that challenge. The Africa Standby Force, he noted, would be useful but would not be ready until 2010.

¶19. (SBU) Kan-Dapaah noted that Ghana's armed forces have served in Cote d'Ivoire, Liberia, and Lebanon, and are considering Sudan. Regarding Somalia, the Minister said that while Ghana has agreed to send troops, there is inadequate equipment. He stressed that the ability to deploy those troops depends on the GOG's ability to maintain them adequately and at the moment the GOG lacks sufficient

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resources.

¶10. (SBU) The Minister said the GOG has examined alternate means to equip the troops, including the possibility of "wet lease" financing of USD 60-70 million. He added that the UN will not provide equipment up front.

¶11. (U) Regarding IMET, Kan-Dapaah said the program has been very useful for Ghana's military. Lieutenant General Danquah added that the military had benefited significantly from the training, and this has helped develop Ghana's peacekeeping capability. He asked whether the USG could increase the number of IMET slots for Ghana.

¶12. (SBU) Responding to Representative Boren's question regarding the Ghanaian military's specific equipment needs, General Danquah said the military needs vehicles, including armored personal carriers and Land Rover-type 4X4s. He also said the Air Force lacks airlift capacity, and requires C-130s if it wants to transport troops. Air Force Chief Boateng also cited the need for helicopters. The military chiefs promised to provide a list of equipment needs.

¶13. (SBU) Regarding counterterrorism activities, General Danquah said that the military's ability to act is limited by the information it receives from national security sources, and said the GOG has a good relationship with U.S. counterparts. He admitted, however, that Ghana does not have good sources of information on its own, and relies upon foreign cooperation.

¶14. (U) CODEL Inhofe cleared this cable.

BROWN